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private amusement, provided he does not try to drag the public to pay money to visit his amateur creations, under the plea that cleverness is the highest thing in art: for, the private dilettante helps the development in the community of an atmosphere of art. But the pretentious dilettantism of a Flaubert, atheistic, pessimistic, neurotic despiser of his fellow-men, chiseling the phrases of a vapid "Madame Bovary" with infinite pains, just to give them an air of cleverness and only to surprise and amuse a dilettante clique who, like Chinese mandarins, retire to their "Ivory Towers," to intoxicate themselves with opium pride in the fewness of their few, such dilettantism is of far less importance in the scheme of things, and less respectable, than ping-pong of hilarious memory. For, as that profound apostle of common-sense, Amiel, said: "Cleverness is useful in everything—sufficient for nothing!"

Luckily Velasquez painted two other self-revealing pictures: "The Crucifixion," and "The Surrender of Breda," sometimes called the "Lances," the latter a huge canvas and also of consummate skill in painting. These show that, had he been properly encouraged by his entourage and not been crushed by the depressing environment of the gloomy Escorial and the dreadful Court of the Spain of his day; had he been at liberty to finish his days in Italy, when

he first went there, and had he there had his soul transfigured by the kindly color and spirituality of that land of poetry he, with his prodigious intellectual gifts, might have become the hero who could have stemmed the decline of the Renaissance.

For, while in his "Lances" he violated one fundamental law of great composition: concentration of effects, yet, in the central figures in that picture, showing the Marquis of Spinola graciously receiving the keys of the city of Breda from the defeated Justin of Nassau, Velasquez showed how expressive of fine feeling he could be, when he himself was truly emotioned, which seems to have been rare; and in his one truly successful religious picture, of Christ alone on the cross, he, as well as any one before him, expressed the pathos of—"It Is Finished!"

That he either did not care to travel further on that high path of stirring the highest emotions of mankind, or was, more probably, prevented from doing so by his hard masters, and held down to painting portraits of dwarfs, court fools, dogs and degenerate royalty, is one of the tragedies of the art world.

Raphael has for five hundred years been called the "Prince of Painters." This is an error. The real prince of "painters" was Velasquez, but Raphael was the Prince of Artists.

A TRIVIAL WORK OF ART TITIAN'S "THE SECRET"

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THIS is a trivial work of art. Why? Because it is a nude? No!

We are absolutely in favor of the Nude in art, because the human figure must ever be the noblest and most effective means of human self-expression. Therefore the more the better: provided, First: that the mere nakedness and fleshliness be poetized out of the nakedness—which is often more disgusting than alluring; and provided: Second: and above all, that in composition, movement and intention—the work does not, in any degree whatsoever, deliberately aim to rouse the physical passions of any observer.

The human body in its perfect state is the most beautiful object in nature. There is a perfection of proportion between the weight and size of a man and woman which, when reached in nature, approaches the ideal the most poetic men in art have created. But this is rare indeed. In the matter of the female form the finest proportions were established by Praxiteles in the statue of which the "Venus de Medici" is a copy and by Pradier in his "Three Graces." And these are of infinite delicacy and grace. These are not Naked figures. They are poetized, spiritualized Nudes. And the lines and the forms of these rouse in normal people only emotions of serene Delight—Tolstoi to the contrary notwithstanding, and we repeat, abnormal people do not count in a discussion of art. The "Venus de Milo" is also of ideal proportions, but just sufficiently more "buxom" to give the impression of Grace—plus Power. This makes her the most majestic of all the Goddesses; and, when we first see her in the Louvre, she lifts us to a plane bordering on the sublime. Moreover, the body is the house of the soul. There-

fore there is absolutely no reason why it should not be represented—if poetized to perfection—in art.

Per contra, to represent it—especially the body of a woman—in its imperfection or decay, except in a medical book, is an æsthetic and social crime. Because in art, as well as in life, the highest interests of the race demand the idealization of woman. If we do not idealize her in art, we drag down art. If we do not idealize her in life, we degrade life. And all the casuistic tergiversations to the contrary, by low-minded and shrimp-souled artists, who, for any reason, represent a woman merely naked, or in a degraded attitude, will not avail against these truths. A work of art which violates this law is destined straight toward ultimate death—in the estimation of mankind, even though encysted by some social "hocus-pocus pull" into some foolishly directed art Museum.

There is absolutely nothing unclean about this picture by Titian. Venus is busily listening to the story of Cupid as he pours his secret into her ear—a charming subject. And the composition is beautiful, the color superb. Then, what is the matter with it? Much!

Titian had a weakness for plethora in woman—he loved the *planturesque*. And nearly all his pictures of women are buxom. When draped, this is all right. When undraped, it is all wrong. And in this picture he went to excess and made Venus so well-padded with embonpoint that he reduced the goddess to a naked, earthly woman. By dragging the goddess from Olympos to the earth: he trivialized a sublime subject. He made a lofty thing—common.

And, in art, at least, this should not be done. If he had reverently painted, and even slightly idealized, a beautiful, nude young girl, and called it simply: "Spring," he would, perhaps, have poetized an ordinary subject and, in so far as he did so, would have lifted us above the brutal reality. That is the rôle of a great Artist. But in this picture, no doubt painted for some sensuous, royal lubber of his day, he frankly reversed the process and appealed to the senses, not exactly to the immoral—because there is here not even the budding of an impure gesture in movement. But he dragged the Goddess down from Elysium to the earth earthy. Instead of idealizing

his model he de-idealized his Goddess—materialized her and so Trivialized a sublime poetic subject.

How different is his nude in his own—"Sacred and Profane Love." How graceful and merely nude the beautiful body!—the whole work lifting us to the plane of serene delight where dwell the gods.

To take a subject capable of being conceived on a lofty plane, and to conceive it on a common, carnal plane, is to trivialize it—no matter how great, or by whom, the craftsmanship displayed. And, however one may pardon this in life, in art that is: "The sin against the Holy Ghost!" Titian in this work was guilty of this sin. That is why it is trivial.

A DEGENERATE WORK OF ART

"WOMAN MAKING HER TOILET" BY DEGAS

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A COSMIC urge is pushing man slowly, painfully but surely to evolve away from the animal. That is Civilization. But, oh, brothers! how we do hate to leave "the flesh pots of Egypt!" Even the best of us are still sufficiently Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde not to throw away the key to our boudoir, even when we do obey that never-sleeping urge—and go to the Temple. Why do we go to the Temple at all? Because we know, deep down, that Tophet lies the other way! Most of us follow the Archangel only because we fear to follow Satan.

But on the road that leads to our destined end there are many stragglers, who follow from fear of being left in solitude, but who cuss the leaders far ahead for not halting to give them a chance—to tread the "primrose path of dalliance." It is these stragglers who will buy such works as this "Woman Making Her Toilet," by Degas.

This is a distinctly degenerate work. Why? Even Degas knows that to represent woman in art, in any other than an idealized way, is a deliberate going counter to this current of civilization—away from the animal. Then why will he make, exhibit and sell so brutal a thing as this pastel drawing?

This work violates in a high degree the highest examples of the Six Elements of Art Power: it is a disgusting subject; conceived on a degraded plane; it is an ugly in composition; it expresses nothing; it is badly drawn; it is ugly in color; and has not even the redeeming feature of technical cleverness. The total result is—immoral. It is not openly pornographic like some of the "modernistic" bestial works, but it is suggestive, and therefore appeals to the sexual and alcoholic degenerates and to those whom these have convinced that this work possesses—a

"personal, individualistic technical touch!" and point of view.

The only thing that can be said of this screed in pastel is, that while in form it is bad, it is not so insane as the forms in the works of that other modernistic, overadvertised degenerate Cézanne. Otherwise it has not one redeeming feature and at first one is amazed that so degenerate a piece of "strumpet art" could find a buyer—even though made by an artist with so "manufactured" a reputation as that of Degas.

Then why will he—who in his early manhood proved that, as a craftsman, he was once capable of exquisite things—make and sell such an artistic wart—redolent with the moral effluvia of the cabarets and rat-holes of the Quartier Bréda and the Place Pigalle? The answer is, first: that, though once a normal producer of things decent and fine—he has gradually become a degenerate; and, second, because enough bar-room souled men and women still exist in the ranks of our public to crave such things as this by Degas: to stimulate their jaded nerves to furnish them with physical sensations of a low order, and sufficiently coarse in fiber to find such a thing an actual stimulus, while to refined people it acts like a moral assafoetida. And Degas, being "a hater of sloppy altruism," according to one of his eulogizers, and a follower of the Pompadour, with her: "After us the deluge!" is not above satisfying, either for popularity with his "modernistic" cronies, or for money, the demands: created by the corrupt dealers in such semi-Lupanar creations.

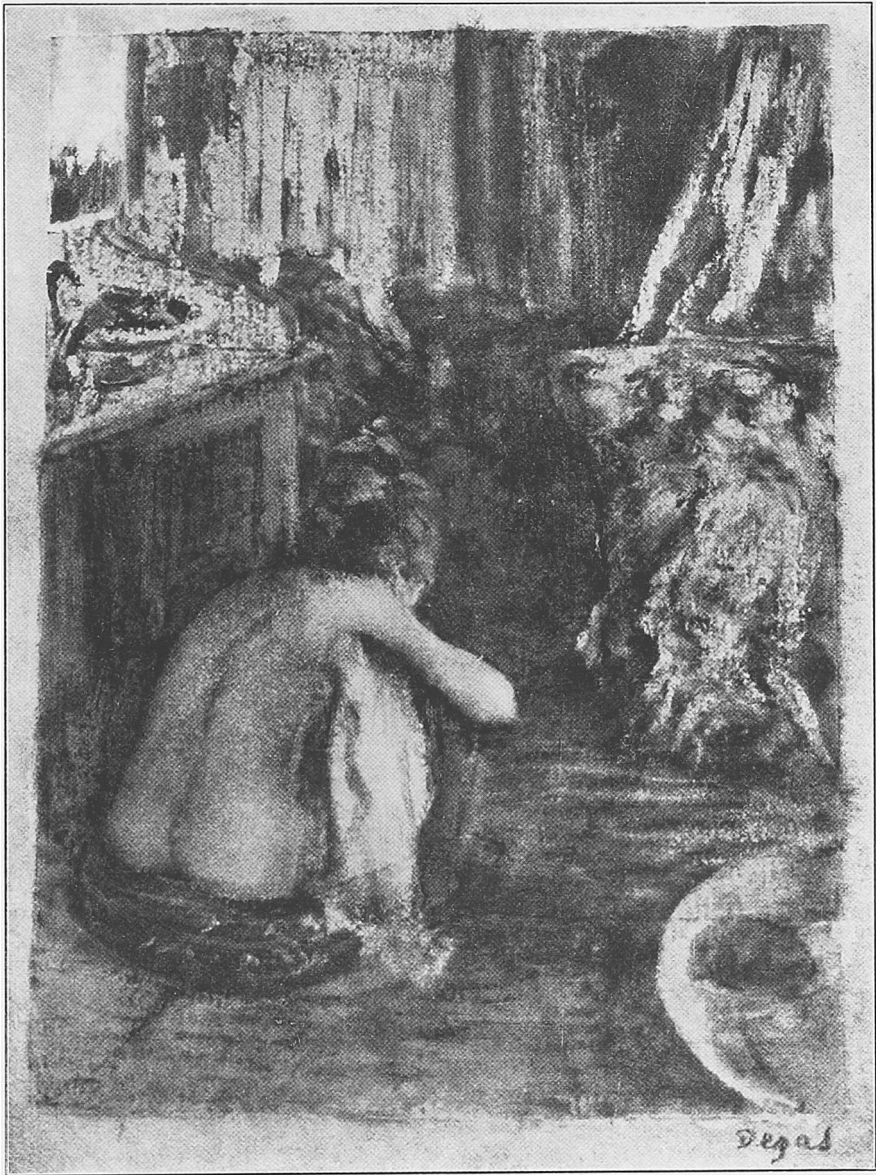
What a combination to hoodwink the Archangel: Degas, the moral runts of the world, and the mephistophelian dealers in—"Objets d'Art"!

Truly, as Beaumarchais said: "We must laugh at it—in order not to weep!"





“THE SECRET” BY TITIAN
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“THE TOILET” BY DEGAS
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